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COUNTRY : USSR

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SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT: "The Most Urgent Problems of Training Command Personnel and of Increasing the Combat Readiness of Border Military District Staffs", by Major-General A. Klyukanov

The Most Urgent Problems of Training Command Personnel
and of
Increasing the Combat Readiness of Border Military
District Staffs

by

Major-General A. Klyukanov

Timely proposals have been appearing in the pages of our military press with regard to the improvement of the methods of operational training of generals, senior officers, and staffs. We believe that, in addition to the problems advanced by the authors of a number of articles, the necessity has arisen to examine ways of qualitative improvement of the organization of the training of troop command personnel of border districts with the aim of bringing it even closer to the operational assignment of troops and to the conditions which the generals and officers will meet in a real situation of the initial period of a war.

The maintenance of the constant combat readiness of our Armed Forces in order to strike, if the necessity arises, an immediate and crushing blow on the enemy, demands from generals and officer personnel a continual and comprehensive theoretical elaboration and a practical fulfillment of a whole series of most important measures.

The command personnel of border district troops, who will be the first to engage in battle, must pay particular attention to working out measures for training troops for swift combat action directly out of concentration areas along definite operational axes.

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As is known, the concept of combat readiness of troops includes a number of factors, including the following decisive one - the comprehensive theoretical and practical preparedness of generals and officers and of their organizational ability. The higher the level of the theoretical training and of the professional and political qualities of officers and generals, the higher the degree of combat readiness and combat efficiency of the troops and staffs.

In order to be prepared for immediate combat operations along the probable operational axes envisaged by the plan of operation for the initial period of a war, the basic troop command personnel of border military districts and armies (by the latter we have in mind Military Councils of armies and the command elements of line large units) must know the operational assignment of the formations and large units.

Unfortunately, commanders of large units and commanders of armies do not know the specific combat tasks which they must fulfill in the course of the initial operations. This may lead to a situation similar to the one quite well known from the sad experience of the initial period of World War II, when, as a result of the staffs' loss of control of operational formations, some commanders of large units did not know what to do during the surprise offensive of the German-fascist army.

In modern conditions of warfare, with the widespread use of nuclear/missile weapons, it will be difficult, in the event of a short threat period, to accomplish combat tasks to work out and organize the total sum of measures for repelling the enemy offensive, and it will be completely impossible to implement practical study of the directions designated for the conduct of troop combat operations, of specific lines, and of objectives on them.

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If we assume that there will be no threat period and that the enemy, by sudden massed strikes of nuclear/missile weapons, aviation, and other means of attack, will unleash a war and will disable some higher staffs, then the importance and acuteness of the need for advanced (even in peacetime) transmission of their operational assignments, even if only to commanders of line large units and commanders of border armies will increase many fold, as will also the study of the probable directions of their combat operations.

Undoubtedly, strict secrecy must be observed in the study and elaboration of these important problems which have great State significance. To these ends, it is necessary to think through and carry out a whole series of measures in order that the entire operational plan for the initial period of a war along a given direction remain secret.

We believe that staffs of military districts should organize one or two special exercises a year for commanders of armies and commanders of line divisions, with a view to raising the readiness of the basic troop command personnel of border military districts to assume immediate control of units and large units of first-line readiness in their movement directly out of concentration areas on predesignated axes and in their commitment to battle. In these training exercises and studies, there should be an elaboration of the measures dealing with the organization of troop combat operations in accordance with their real operational assignments.

To these same ends, it is desirable to conduct special tactical rides (polevaya poyezdka) along probable axes and lines of troop movement in initial engagements, both on the territory of the Soviet Union and on the territory of the bordering peoples' democracies. Our border military districts, as is known, are located at various distances from the national borders of capitalist countries. Consequently, the conditions for conducting combat operations during a

surprise attack by the enemy will be different for the troops of different districts. Some will have to operate independently from the territory or on the territory of the Soviet Union. Others, in all probability, will engage in battle in coordination with armies of the countries of the Socialist Camp either on the territory or from the territory of these states. In our opinion, the above-mentioned circumstances explain the great importance of careful advance study by command personnel of concrete operational axes in their areas.

In recent years, during command-staff exercises on the ground dealing with the initial period of a war, a provisional national border was usually established deep within the territory of our country. Staffs were concentrated and provisional groupings of our troops and of probable enemy troops were created behind this provisional border. The execution of combat operations of the antagonists was carried out in the zone along the provisional national border and then to either side of it (in the direction of the actual border or into the depth of the country), but always on the territory of the Soviet Union. The training goals of these exercises were fulfilled but removed to a certain extent from the actual situation in which troops find themselves in peacetime and from those concrete tasks they will have to fulfill in the first days of a war.

Of course, such exercises are highly useful for the numerous staffs and for the generals and officer personnel participating in them, and it is extremely necessary to conduct them in the future. However, along with such exercises, command-staff exercises under conditions existing in the border territory should be conducted for a limited number of troop command personnel of border military districts.

In accordance with instructions of the Minister of Defense in his directive on operational training for 1961, it would be an extraordinarily useful method of

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training troops and staffs to have a series of exercises and group exercises which would begin with placing staffs on combat alert and with their transfer to the established concentration areas.

In such exercises and group exercises, the possible nature of the combat operations of the probable enemy's army should be studied not only from the point of view of his approach to methods of surprise attack and to the conduct of combat operations in general, but also with regard to those probable tasks which enemy troops may have in the engagements of the initial period of a war. In connection with this, it is necessary to take the grouping of our troops, border armies, and military districts actually existing at the present time with their actual composition, TOE, number of large units, units, and the areas of their actual concentration.

In the plans for these exercises, it is essential to reflect the concrete conditions of the disposition of the troops of a border military district, the probable nature of the operational situation and the tasks of formations and large units, not disclosing by this, of course, the real operational plan.

For example, the troops of the border Odessa Military District are deployed at a distance of 700-1,000 kilometers from the coastal borders of countries of the aggressive military bloc (Turkey, Greece). The probable enemy plans, by means of a surprise launching of nuclear strikes by missiles, aircraft, and naval forces in this direction during the initial period of a war, to destroy or annihilate the vitally important administrative-political, economic, and military centers of Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, and of the southwestern oblasts of the Soviet Union and, by a simultaneous invasion by ground troop groupings deep into the territory of

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the socialist countries, to seize the most important objectives and to rout the basic army troop groupings of countries friendly to us.

It is to be expected that the enemy will assign his troops the mission of destroying, by means of nuclear/missile strikes, or of capturing, by means of dropping airborne forces and by operations of mobile units of ground troops, the existing crossings over the Danube River and other water barriers and also the basic passages across the Eastern Carpathians and Transylvanian Alps, in order to cut off and isolate the troops of Albania, Bulgaria, and Rumania from Soviet troops.

In such conditions, it seems essential to us that the basic command personnel of a district and the personnel of its large units study the following problems in the system of operational and command preparation; the organization and the conduct of marches over long distances; the crossing of water lines, mountain passages and passes under conditions of enemy counteractions; the organization and conduct of meeting engagements as the most typical form of troop combat operations under the conditions of an invasion initiated by the enemy; the organization of capturing and holding advantageous lines until the second troop echelons, mobilized at the beginning of a war, are brought up; the problems of the organization of coordination with the armies of the peoples' democracies; measures for materiel, technical, and medical support, and other problems. //

In the example under consideration, district troops may encounter particular difficulty in the organization and conduct of regroupings over considerable distances with an exit, if such is required, for example, into the territory of southern Rumania and Bulgaria. The fact is that during the conduct of a regrouping by combined methods (units move on their own on wheeled transport and tracked equipment is transported by rail), approximately

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twice as much time is demanded for complete concentration of troops than if they had completed the march exclusively under their own power. The difference in width of railroad gauge in the USSR and in Rumania and Bulgaria requires additional time for transloading tanks and other tracked equipment, by dint of which tanks will not be able to take part in combat operations simultaneously with their units and large units which completed the march by motor vehicle. We consider the best method of regrouping under conditions of nuclear/missile war to be the simultaneous movement of units and large units under their own power. To this end units of the Odessa Military District, for example, are conducting appropriate studies to increase the cruising range of wheeled and tracked vehicles to 1,000-1,500 kilometers by adding to the amount of fuel contained in the vehicles.

Measures for combat, engineer, materiel-technical and other types of march support will require the most serious attention, and they need, in our opinion, further study and clarification during the exercises and group exercises proposed by us. It seems necessary to us, in this connection, to solve all problems of the planning of regrouping and of the conduct of our troop combat operations in coordination with the Rumanian and Bulgarian armies.

We have dwelt in detail on one example in order to show how important it will be, in our opinion, to conduct operational training of command personnel of border military districts under conditions as close as possible to the probable nature of military operations in a given operational direction. Such training, carried out in advance in peacetime, will resolve a large number of problems of a theoretical nature and will fulfill practical preparatory measures of organizational and technical procedure.

It is perfectly obvious that with attentive examination in each border military district, a special list of problems, questions, and measures

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will arise which must be solved in accordance with the given conditions of the theater of military operations and with local peculiarities.

The Armed Forces of the USSR have good experience in strengthening friendly contacts and in organization of coordination with the armies of the Warsaw Pact countries, and also in the study of the general principles of combat operations from the command-staff and other exercises to which command personnel and some staffs of formations of the armies of the peoples' democracies are invited. Unfortunately, this experience is not shared even with a limited number of generals and senior officers of the Soviet troops deployed in the border military districts who, in case of war, must personally direct combat operations of their troops in coordination with the troops, and on or from the territory of the countries of the Socialist Camp.

For example, in the practical conditions of the Odessa Military District, for raising the combat readiness of large unit commanders and of the command element of operational formations, and with the aim of establishing coordination, strengthening friendly ties, and becoming familiar with the armies of Rumania and Bulgaria, for the study of the terrain, probable lines of combat operations, water obstacles, mountain passages and passes, road conditions and other peculiarities of the theater of military operations, it is highly expedient to assign command personnel periodically to exercises of troops and staffs of the peoples' democracies, to organize field and military-historical trips, tourist trips, and excursions, to send generals and senior officers for rest periods to the sanatoria of these countries, and to utilize other possibilities. All this will contribute to the careful study of the theater of military operations and of actual operational axes.

Under modern conditions the small peacetime composition of the ground troops of border military districts will be reinforced, if the situation demands,

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with large units and formations by full mobilization of the latter. These complex and responsible tasks, naturally, must constantly be the cynosure of attention of the command personnel and higher staffs. In light of these demands on the command-staff exercises proposed by us, it is necessary to explore all aspects of the organization of troop control of a border military district connected with the difficulties of simultaneous solution of two problems: the conduct of combat operations and the full mobilization of troops. Thus, in the peacetime composition of troops of a military district there are line divisions (of increased combat readiness) and divisions of reduced strength. The field command of an army, army units, and front units are also kept at reduced strength. It is natural that the line divisions, after concentrating in their areas as a result of combat alert, will initiate a march to fulfill combat tasks, and that divisions of reduced strength, army units and supporting subunits of army headquarters will begin full mobilization.

Therefore, the commander and the field command of an army must assure firm control of large units on the march and of their combat operations in the event of deployment for engagement with the enemy and, simultaneously, to direct the conduct of full mobilization. In this connection, the distance between the large units executing a march or engaged in battle and the areas of full mobilization, will increase continually. This is why it is necessary to work out right now methods by which a reduced strength headquarters with limited means of communication could assure uninterrupted control of troops until the completion of mobilization and the bringing up of fully mobilized units and large units to the area of combat operations of the first echelon of the army.

Therefore, problems of the organization of troop control of border formations in the course of the first operations of the initial period of a war demand urgent study and practical assimilation.

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Without question, the mastery of practical measures for full troop mobilization is connected with the removal of people and equipment from the production of material wealth. This is an expensive measure for the State and it is, therefore, undertaken very rarely. At the same time, the demand for full mobilization of various large units within the shortest time is especially important for the formations of border military districts, because the speed of buildup of first-echelon troop strength, consisting of a limited number of divisions of increased combat readiness, will depend on the period required for fully mobilizing large units and units of reduced strength, of which, as a rule, the second echelons and reserves of armies will be created.

As is known, the military leadership of the imperialist states is planning in advance to launch nuclear strikes in the initial period of war, against the most important administrative-political centers, with the aim of disorganizing control and disrupting the mobilization and buildup of the armed forces of the countries of the Socialist Camp. These intentions of the aggressive circles must be considered in our mobilization preparations and work.

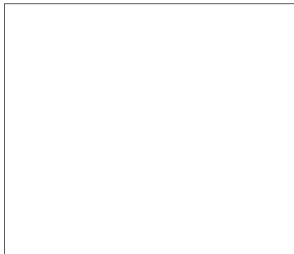
In our opinion, it is necessary to organize joint special exercises of the basic command personnel of the troops and of military commissariats. In these exercises we should work out and investigate a whole series of measures directed primarily at:

- the maximum curtailment of the time required for full mobilization of the troops;
- the protection of the personnel, motor transport and other equipment withdrawn from the national economy for the mobilization and buildup of troops, from nuclear strikes and other enemy means of mass destruction;
- the creation of conditions for stable and uninterrupted control of the process of full mobilization.

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The above-mentioned problems of improving the training of generals, senior officers and of the readiness of the staffs of border military districts for control of troop combat operations do not encompass the whole range of tasks, in support of troop combat operations, which must be fulfilled by operational formations and large units on their entry into engagements of the initial period of a war directly from concentration areas and of full mobilization along designated directions; however, they are, in our opinion, most important in the problem of increasing the combat readiness of our border district troops.



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